

Roger Moore

Colusa County, Moore Brothers

CHARLIE JENSEN



Roger Moore marks and catalogs eggs in his incubation room, where he has hatched more than 10,000 mallards.

Saving and Rearing Wild Ducks

Some wildlife-friendly farming practices are strictly a labor of love. "The reason for doing them has little to do with your bottom line and everything to do with the 'feel good' pay-back you get for giving something back to nature," according to Roger Moore, a Colusa County farmer who has been giving something back for several decades.

While harvesting wheat, Moore noticed that he flushed ducks nesting in his fields, ran over their nests and eggs, and sometimes killed the hens in the process. "I also noticed that the returning hens trying to find their nests couldn't locate them because their visual landmarks had been harvested," said Moore. "Even harvesting around nests resulted in little or no success; so as soon as I flushed a hen, I got off, located the nest, and collected the eggs and nesting materials in a paper bag."

The procedure hasn't varied much in 30 years. He collects the bagged nests from his equipment operators and from other farmers that are interested in helping. He places the eggs in his incubators (he can handle 1,800-to-2,000 eggs)

and incubates them until they hatch. He then teams up with Fish and Game warden Charlie Jensen and some neighbors. The group divides up the ducklings, raising them in pens until they're ready for banding and release.

His wild duck salvage program, which is licensed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has saved up to 2,400 ducks in a single year! Band returns indicate that Moore's ducks are travelers: some have been found in Montana, Texas, South Dakota, and even Canada.

During the summer of 1993 these extraordinary efforts were recognized with the Department of Fish and Game's "Wildlife Conservation Award," which Roger Moore received on the occasion of banding and releasing his 10,000th duck.

Moore has since received extensive recognition for his wildlife-friendly farming efforts. A soft-spoken, modest man, Moore claims this is just part of his farming operation now. He and the volunteers he has recruited have demonstrated that conservation can happen if people take time to do it.



Young mallards rest in one of the Moore's holding ponds.

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